



STATE OF WASHINGTON WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

1111 Israel Road SW · P.O. Box 42650 · Olympia, Washington 98504-2650 (360) 902-8500 · Washington Telecommunications Relay Service at (800) 833-6388 www.parks.wa.gov

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS

Description of proposal:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider and disclose anticipated environmental impacts related to formal land classification pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 352-16 for the approximately 850 acre area known as the *Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA)* at Mount Spokane State Park. The purpose of land classification is to provide general policy guidance to staff on appropriate management and use of park holdings. The classification system evaluates state park lands and places them into one of six land classifications. These classification categories include *Recreation, Resource Recreation, Natural, Heritage, Natural Forest,* and *Natural Area Preserves.* The classification categories under consideration for the PASEA include *Recreation, Resource Recreation* and *Natural Forest.* Use limitations imposed by specific classifications are detailed in the *Land Classification Management Guidelines* and *Land Classification Compatibility Matrix for Facilities and Activities.* The land classifications under consideration for the PASEA are included as an attachment. Examples of facilities and activities that are permitted dependent on land classification include:

- Alpine ski facilities
- Campgrounds
- Cross-country skiing trails
- Day use facilities
- Equestrian trails

- Hiking trails
- Interpretive facilities
- Mountain biking trails
- Nordic track skiing trails
- Snowmobile trails

The EIS for this non-project land classification action will analyze a proposal from Mt. Spokane 2000 to construct a new chairlift together with seven new ski trails and accompanying infrastructure in a 279 acre portion of the PASEA. This proposal is included as the attachment *Mount Spokane 2000 Project Proposal for Ski Area Expansion*. Although the EIS will consider both the non-project land classification and the project proposal within the same document, it is noted that these are distinct and separate actions to be taken by the Commission.

Proponent: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

Location of Proposal: Mount Spokane State Park, N. 26107 Mount Spokane Park Drive, Mead, WA 99021; approximately 30 miles NE of the City of Spokane, Spokane County. The PASEA

is comprised of an approximately 850 acre area located generally west of the existing ski area within portions of Sections 8, 9, 16, and 17 in Township 28N, Range 45E.

Lead Agency: Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

EIS Required: The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared. A copy of this scoping notice and related documents can be found on the State Parks website: http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/mtspokane2/

Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS within a 30 day comment period beginning on November 12, 2013 and closing on December 12, 2013. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required.

Written comments are being solicited by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and must be received on or before December 12, 2013. All scoping comments are welcome and will be considered. Please address your comments to Randy Kline, Environmental Program Manager, at randy.kline@parks.wa.gov.

Responsible Official:

Randy Kline

Position/Title:

Environmental Program Manager

Phone/Email:

(360) 902-8632/randy.kline@parks.wa.gov

FAX:

(360) 586-0207

Address:

1111 Israel Rd SW

Olympia, WA 98504-2650

Date: 11-12-13

Signature:

Don Hoch Director



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Land classifications under consideration for the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA)

Land Classification

In 1995, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission adopted a land classification system. Application of the system creates zones, or land classifications, within a park. Six distinct classifications determine what recreational uses and facilities are appropriate in different areas of a park. In general, sensitive areas are classified restrictively and allow only low-intensity uses and development of minor facilities. Less sensitive areas are classified to allow higher-intensity uses and more extensive facilities development.

The Commission's Land Classification Management Guidelines and Land Classification and Compatibility Matrix (Appendix A) provide guidance on land classification and allowed uses in State Parks. In the Land Classification and Compatibility Matrix, facilities and activities are allowed either as a "permitted" use requiring normal agency design review or as a "conditional" use meaning that they may be permitted but conditioned to assure design is compatible with the purpose of the land classification and abutting classification objectives. Additionally, conditional use activities (but not conditional use facilities) require the concurrence of the Commission. A full description of the classification categories and list of permitted and conditional uses for facilities and activities can be found in Appendix A.

Based on current and historic use and input received from the public during the Mount Spokane State Park planning process, the land classifications of *Natural Forest Area*, *Resource Recreation*, and *Recreation* are under consideration for classification of the Potential Alpine Ski Expansion Area (PASEA) (See Option1 and Option 2). The PASEA is currently unclassified and is managed as a *Natural Forest Area*. As required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this land classification will consider a no-action alternative that would continue management as a *Natural Forest Area*. Current recreational facilities within the PASEA include the Chair 4 road and non-motorized trails. Current recreational activities occurring within the PASEA include snowmobile use on Chair 4 road, back-country alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, mountain biking and equestrian use. Based on the land classification that is ultimately adopted by the Commission, a range of facilities and activities – as contained in the *Land Classification and Compatibility Matrix* - may be considered for the PASEA.

The following land classifications, as shown on Options1 and 2, are under consideration for the PASEA:

Natural Forest Area



Areas classified as *Natural Forest* are designated for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural forest processes while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses, and which contain:

- (a) Old-growth forest communities that have developed for one hundred fifty years or longer and have the following structural characteristics: Large old-growth trees, large snags, large logs on land, and large logs in streams; or
- (b) Mature forest communities that have developed for ninety years or longer; or
- (c) Unusual forest communities and/or interrelated vegetative communities of significant ecological value.

Under both classification scenarios shown in Options1 and 2, all land within the PASEA below (west) of the Chair 4 road would be classified as *Natural Forest Area*.

Permitted Facilities and Activities

Permitted facilities and activities require agency design review but do not require additional Commission approval within the land classification and can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of permitted facilities and activities in *Natural Forest Areas* include interpretive trails, hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, off-trail hiking, off-trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Conditional Use Facilities

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in *Natural Forest Areas* include interpretive kiosks, composting and vault toilets, and paved non-motorized trails.

Conditional Use - Facilities

The Commission will consider the following conditional use facility types for areas classified as *Natural Forest Area* in the PASEA:

- Interpretive Kiosks
- Sanitary Composting/Vault

Conditional Use Activities

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned <u>and</u> require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in *Natural Forest Areas* include filming/special events and technical rock climbing.

Conditional Use - Activities

The Commission will consider the following conditional use activities for areas classified as *Natural Forest Area* in the PASEA:

• Filming/Special Events

Resource Recreation Area

Areas classified as *Resource Recreation* are suited and/or developed for natural and/or cultural resource-based medium-intensity and low-intensity outdoor recreational use.

Permitted facilities and activities require agency design review but do not require additional Commission approval within the land classification and can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of permitted facilities and activities in *Resource Recreation Areas* include primitive camping, interpretive trails and kiosks, hiking trails, cross-country ski trails, technical rock climbing, off-trail hiking, off-trail snowmobiling, off-trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in *Resource Recreation Areas* include horse-oriented camping, equestrian facilities, alpine ski facilities, equestrian trails, mountain biking trails, snowmobile trails and paved non-motorized trails. As proposed in Options 1 and 2, alpine ski facilities would not be an allowed conditional use in *Resource Recreation Areas*, only backcountry alpine skiing as an activity would be allowed.

Conditional Use - Facilities

The Commission will consider the following conditional use facility types for areas classified as *Resource Recreation* in the PASEA:

- Trails Equestrian
- Trails Mountain Biking
- Trails Snowmobile

Conditional Use Activities

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned <u>and</u> require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in *Resource Recreation Areas* include alpine skiing, off-trail equestrian use, off-trail biking and mushing/sled dogs.

Conditional Use - Activities

The Commission will consider the following conditional use activities for areas classified as *Resource Recreation* in the PASEA:

• Winter - Alpine Skiing

Recreation Area

Areas classified as *Recreation* are suited and/or developed for high-intensity outdoor recreational use, conference, cultural and/or educational centers, or other uses serving large numbers of people.

Permitted facilities and activities require agency design review but do not require additional Commission approval within the land classification and can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of permitted facilities and activities in

Recreation Areas include camping, day-use picnic areas, informal play fields, snowmobile trails, mountain bike trails, cross-country ski trails, technical rock climbing, off-trail snowmobiling, off-trail cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Conditional use facilities can be further conditioned within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use facilities in *Recreation Areas* include horse-oriented camping, environmental learning centers, equestrian facilities, alpine ski facilities and equestrian trails.

Conditional Use - Facilities

The Commission will consider the following facilities for areas classified as *Recreation* in the PASEA:

- Skiing Alpine Facilities
- Trails Equestrian

Conditional Use Activities

Conditional use activities can be further conditioned <u>and</u> require specific Commission concurrence within the land classification and then can be undertaken provided they comply with local, state and federal regulations. Examples of conditional use activities in *Recreation Areas* include alpine skiing, off-trail equestrian use, off-trail biking and mushing/sled dogs.

Conditional Use - Activities

The Commission will consider the following activities for areas classified as *Recreation* in the PASEA:

• Winter – Alpine Skiing